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DEPT FOR ISN/NESS (DRUDOLPH, DFENSTERMACHER), EAP/K, EAP/MLS
DEPT OF ENERGY FOR NNSA (ABIENIAWSKI, KCUMMINS, IBOLSHINSKY,
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SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ENRG](#) [KGIT](#) [KNNP](#) [PARM](#) [OTRA](#) [VM](#)
SUBJECT: LETTER FROM MOST VM THANG TO NNSA BIENIAWSKI

REF: A) STATE 91019, B) HANOI 1218

11. (U) This is an action request for DOE - please see para 5.

12. (U) On July 25, ESTHoff met with Mr. Le Doan Phac, Director of the International Cooperation Department of the Vietnam Atomic Energy Commission (VAEC). In the meeting, Phac presented an official letter from Vice Minister of Science and Technology Tran Quoc Thang to Mr. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Assistant Deputy Administrator for Global Threat Reduction Andrew Bieniawski. Text of letter follows:

13. (SBU) Begin text of letter:

Hanoi, 25 July 2007

Dear Mr. Bieniawski,

I have received your letter of 5 July 2007 concerning the project on conversion of Dalat Nuclear Research Reactor from the use of high-enriched uranium (HEU) fuel to the use of low-enriched uranium (LEU) fuel. I note with satisfaction that in a common effort, all relevant sides have been closely cooperating to complete successfully the project.

Regarding the issues mentioned in your letter, I would like to exchange with you my opinions and suggestions as follows:

(1) The fuel conversion is planned to take place in this September. Therefore, during preparation to fix the schedule, please take into consideration that Vietnam National Day holiday will be from 1-3 September and some Vietnamese officers, who are involved in the project, will attend the IAEA General Conference from 17-21 September;

(2) Regarding your proposal on the Ceremony, please send us your Tentative Ceremony Agenda and list of participants for our review and discussion with you to finalize and submit to the Vietnamese Government for approval. This request is in accordance to our rules;

(3) Please contact the IAEA as soon as possible for the IAEA's approval of the TC project of US \$500,000 that you have committed to support Viet Nam through the IAEA under the framework of the fuel conversion project. The Vietnam's project request has been sent the IAEA and NNSA (to Dr. Igor Bolshinsky);

(4) Regarding conclusion of the DOE-MOST Implementing Agreement, Vietnamese side has a viewpoint that this Agreement will be discussed and negotiated by the two sides in an appropriate time in future. At present, the MOST of Viet Nam and the US DOE could conclude "the Arrangement between the Department of Energy of the United States of America and the Ministry of Science and Technology

of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for Information Exchange and Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy" (prepared by Office of Global Security Engagement and Cooperation, NNSA - Director of the Office is Mr. Maurice A. Mallin).

Taking this occasion, once again, I would like to express our appreciation for your close cooperation and kind supports.

Sincerely,

(signed)

Tran Quoc Thang
Vice-Minister
Ministry of Science and Technology

End of text.

14. (SBU) During the discussion, Mr. Phac provided the following additional details to the points: a) the window of September 5-14 is favorable; b) any press ceremony should be kept small so that MOST (and not another ministry) will be authorized to handle the event, which could be approved quickly by them; c) since MOST does not have a lot of experience with such ceremonies, they request a detailed proposal to consider.

15. (U) COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST FOR DOE: ESTHoff raised informally with MOST ADA Bieniawski's proposal to invite a limited number of correspondents, including an "embedded" CNN reporter, to travel with the official delegation during the fuel conversion. MOST clearly requires more details of the press elements of this event before considering approval. Post requests NNSA to work directly with Embassy Public Affairs Officer Angela Aggeler (aggelerap@state.gov) and ESTH Officer Nathan Sage so that a

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country-specific press plan for the activity can be quickly developed that meets MOST's requirement. Post understands NNSA has experience handling such operations in other countries and looks forward to discuss details of a proposed press plan.

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